

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	<i>OK</i>
DATE ENTERED	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC  
DRAKE HOTEL

AND/OR COMMON  
same

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 140 East Walton

CITY, TOWN Chicago

STATE Illinois

VICINITY OF CODE

COUNTY CODE Cook 7

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 7

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME DH Venture  
Jerrold Wexler and Edward Ross

STREET & NUMBER c/o Jupiter Corporation  
400 E. Randolph

CITY, TOWN Chicago

STATE Illinois 60601

VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Cook County Recorder of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER 118 North Clark Street

CITY, TOWN Chicago

STATE Illinois

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE East Lake Shore Drive District (Drake Hotel to 999 N. Lake Shore Drive),  
Proposed by the Advisory Committee to the Commission on Chicago Architectural  
and Historical Landmarks

DATE 5/23/79

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Commission on Chicago Architectural and Historical Landmarks  
320 N. Clark Street Room 800

CITY, TOWN Chicago

STATE Illinois 60610

\_\_\_FEDERAL \_\_\_STATE \_\_\_COUNTY LOCAL

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT

GOOD

FAIR

DETERIORATED

RUINS

UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED

ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE

MOVED

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

On a corner site with Walton Street to the south, Michigan Avenue to the west and E. Lake Shore Drive to the north, the Drake Hotel is a primarily H-shaped building of 13 stories and one basement. It is constructed of smooth limestone on pile foundations. The building changes at the third story from rectangular to an H-plan, affording light and air to all guest rooms on all four exposures.

The exterior wall treatment is derived from the Italian Renaissance: pilasters and columns around the E. Lake Shore Drive rectangular section, a console and garland below the third story balconettes, a belt course between the tenth and eleventh stories, foliate ornamentation between the top story windows and a dentiled cornice. Rows of windows alternate full and flattened arches at the piano nobile.

The majority of windows are double-hung, 2/2 sash. Above the belt course are windows with a triangular pediment. This tabernacle window treatment is also found on a series of windows on the Michigan Avenue side of the building. Balustraded sills are placed at some windows at the complete attic story. The attic story is topped in the center of the north facade with a second attic story eight bays wide enriched with foliate ornamentation.

The straightforward ground floor below a belt course is given over to shops around the perimeter, connected by an interior arcade. The major public spaces are on the second floor, and flow into one another on two levels. The magnificently appointed grand ballroom lies between the arms of the H on the north, overlooking the lakeshore. A canopy shelters the Walton Street entrance.

The building has had little alteration; single pane windows have replaced sash ones on the upper stories.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE: 1

At the northern terminus of this grand boulevard, in an area still girded by the castles and chateaux of the city's wealthiest citizens, and only recently invaded by the new and not yet entirely "proper" phenomena of the high-rise luxury apartment, was the Drake Hotel. As the white terra cotta Wrigley Building (1921) signalled the commercial development of the southern end of the new street, the Drake embodied the genteel luxury of the northern limit. The site is certainly one of the finest the city affords, as Lake Shore Drive curves around the jut of man-made land and meets Michigan Avenue at Oak Street heads north into Lincoln Park.

With quiet solidity the hotel has survived major changes in the surrounding area. The Drake originally looked north over a small tree-filled park skirting the east-west section of Lake Shore Drive and viewed obliquely the sandy beach created in the curve. Later conversion of the Drive from its original carriage road character into an eightlane highspeed artery, complete with a tunnelled interchange at the Michigan/Oak intersection the original proposal for a lannon stone clad overpass was abandoned after vehement protest - has removed most of the resort-like character once such a major component of the Gold Coast area. While the hotel no longer sites with the beach directly at its feet, its scale and dignity, together with the arrangement of the major rooms on the second floor, like the Italian piano nobile, rather than at the ground level, allow the visitor to the loggia-like ballroom to look above the traffic, through the trees to the lakefront beyond. When viewed from without in its setting at the head of Michigan Avenue, flanked to the east by an unbroken procession of early 20th century apartment buildings, the hotel forms the first stair step for the progression of important structures to the south of it; e.g. the Palmolive (now Playboy) Tower and the John Hancock Center - beaux art, art deco, structuralist contemporary - three monuments within three blocks. In addition to its fine materials, excellent workmanship serene proportions, viable spaces and prime location, the building makes what is probably its finest contribution to the cityscape by the way it symbolizes and defines the character of its neighborhood, and acts as a counterpoint and enhancement as well as an anchor to a great promenade.

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) urban planning
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1920

~~BUILDER~~/ARCHITECT Marshall and Fox

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Drake Hotel is significant for its architectural design, for the architects who created it, and for its contribution to the urban design of the city of Chicago. The relationship of the Drake to Chicago is likened to that of the Plaza in New York. Truly stately, it was completed in 1920 by Marshall and Fox to accommodate the carriage trade of that era and continues to do so today. Just as Chicago's financial and cultural reputation has grown, so too has this hotel appropriately become one of the foremos' monuments to the general public.

Stylistically, the Drake Hotel represents the return to more "correct" historical prototypes (generally following classical, Renaissance, or eighteenth century models) during the period around the First World War. The chaste Italian Renaissance articulation of the Drake expresses a sophistication not seen in other Chicago hotels that appealed to the genteel class of the era and today. The horizontal repetition of windows at every floor, and the piano nobile suggest the Italianate mode which is distinctive among Chicago hotels.

The architects were Benjamin Marshall (1874-1944) and Charles Eli Fox (1870-1926). Their firm (1905-1924) had also designed the Blackstone and Edgewater Beach Hotels, the Blackstone Theater, the ill-fated Iroquois Theater, as well as half of the numerous luxury apartment buildings marking the remarkable development of the "Gold Coast". Marshall, born to wealth, had no formal architectural training, but his buildings show an intuitive understanding for the eclectic forms which had supplanted the vigor of the Chicago School. In his structures the emphasis was on the elegance and luxury his peers requested. Fine materials, spaciousness, light, conveniences were valued more than boldness or originality of expression. His clients were among the leading financiers, hoteliers and impresarios of the city. The Drake was built, for example, on land which had belonged to the Potter Palmer estate; among the stockholders were the Swifts and Armours as well as the Palmer sons.

The Drake occupies the eastern end of a superb block created in the early part of the century by landfill in an area now designated as Streeterville, after Captain George Wellington Streeter, a circus promoter. After running aground on a sandbar, he filled in the area around his beached schooner and laid claim to the land as a sovereign state. Evicted during the First World War, Streeter's domain was taken over by the city of Chicago, the landfill completed, and this prime real estate fully developed inside of two decades. The eastern boundary of the Streeterville area had been known as Pine Street, running along the original shoreline and terminating at the north bank of the Chicago River. With the extension of the landfill, the largely residential street was transformed in accordance with the Burnham Plan. All the buildings on the eastern side were demolished. The street was widened into a boulevard connected with Michigan Avenue south of the river by a beaux arts ornamented double decked lift bridge, and its name also changed to Michigan Avenue.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Condit, Carl. Chicago, Building Planning and Urban Technology, 1910-1929. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973.
- Mayer and Wade. Growth of a Metropolis. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973.
- Randall, John D. History of the Development of Building Construction in Chicago. Urbana: University of Illinois, 1949.
- Willie, Lois. Forever Open Clear and Free. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1972.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

QUADRANGLE NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
UTM REFERENCES

QUADRANGLE SCALE \_\_\_\_\_

A 


 B 


C 


 D 


E 


 F 


G 


 H 


VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The west parts of lots 16 and 27 and all of lots 17 to 26, inclusive, in Fitzsimmons Addition to the City of Chicago, a subdivision of Block 8 of Canal Trustees' subdivision of the South Frac'l. Quarter of Frac'l Section 3-39-14.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

Not Applicable

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CCODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

David Norris

ORGANIZATION

Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois

DATE

1 October 1797

STREET & NUMBER

407 S. Dearborn Street Suite 1705

TELEPHONE

(312) 922-1742

CITY OR TOWN

Chicago

STATE

Illinois 60605

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

ATTEST: KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION